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ABSTRACT

Given the paucity of evidence accurately characterizing private education, this paper synthesizes and interprets available research on private school enrollments, religious affiliations, tuition levels, characteristics of patrons, and common features of operation. The organization of data on church-affiliated schools is found to be faulty, with too little information currently available on levels of tuition, attributes of fundamentalist schools, or ethnic and community schools. With the exception of fundamentalist schools, there has been no dramatic expansion in private-school enrollment. The recent growth in fundamentalist schools probably stems from sensitivity to court decisions on school prayer and the perceived breakdown of social mores in public schools. Private schools, moreover, reflect rather than create religious, ethnic, and economic segregation. Whereas parents' motivations for enrolling children in private schools may involve religious and ethnic distinctions, other reasons may include public schools' waning financial support, discipline problems, and large sizes, as well as such issues as the disparity between parents' and teachers' values and government regulation of public schools. Overall, most private schools share a strong social cohesion among parents, who are generally very interested in the ways in which their children are educated. More study is needed to clarify policy issues surrounding private schools. (JW)

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PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper is a synthesis and interpretation of the fragmentary evidence currently available on private schools in the U.S. Suggestions to the effect that private school enrollment increases are now threatening to eclipse the public schools are shown to be at variance with the evidence. National averages obscure developments outside the Catholic sector of private education, since Catholic schools, representing a large proportion of the movement have declined so notably since 1965 as to obscure growth in other private schools. It is shown that private schools of different types wax and wane under different circumstances, depending on fiscal structure, primary patron motivations, and other factors. The paper ends by discussing private school commonalities that seem logically attributable to the special modes of organization and finance which distinguish virtually all private schools from schools in the public sector.

In important respects the literature on U.S. private education consists of scattered shreds of knowledge, patched together with ignorance and presupposition. Considering the funds devoted to other educational research, the number of students attending private schools, and the national importance of the pertinent policy issues, the neglect of this area, especially by federal funding agencies, is difficult to understand.

Given the paucity of the evidence, the discussion that follows cannot flow readily from an evidential base. It is, rather, a synthesis and interpretation laboriously derived from sparse research and from unsystematic information and impression gleaned during more than two decades of contact with private schools. Many generalizations offered here are hypothetical.

I. Magnitude

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) estimates that private schools constitute about 18 percent of all elementary and secondary schools in the U.S., enroll about 10.7 percent of all students at these levels, produce about 10 percent of all high school graduates, and employ just one percent more (11 percent) of all teachers in the

elementary and secondary grades (Eldridge, 1980; McLaughlin & Wise, 1980). It will be shown later that these estimates are low by some unknown factor.

In 1976-77, the quality of data concerning private schools was enhanced by the introduction of regular national surveys by NCES. NCES estimates of the number of private elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. was 20,083 in 1976-77, 20,073 in 1977-78, and 19,666 in 1978-79. Total enrollment in private schools was estimated at 5,167,000 in 1976-77, 5,140,000 in 1977-78, and 5,086,000 in 1978-79. This enrollment was 10.4 percent of the national total (for public and private schools combined) in 1976-77, 10.5 percent in 1977-78 and 10.7 in 1978-79 (Eldridge, 1980). The private school enrollment decline during the three years, 1.6 percent, was considerably less than the public school enrollment decline, during the same period, of 3.9 percent. During those years, private schools increased their share of the school-age population. As was noted earlier, these estimates are low.

In contrast to these relative private school gains, the most reliable estimates showed an earlier decline in the proportion of the nation's school-age children who were enrolled in private schools. NCES figures show the private school proportion of national enrollment dropping from 12.1 percent in 1967 to 9.7 percent in 1973. This loss was simultaneously a function of absolute private school enrollment decreases and public school enrollment increases (National Center for Education Statistics, 1980).

Actually, the highest private school proportion of national elementary-secondary enrollment came even earlier--13.6 pecent in 1959-60. In the years that followed, public schools experienced phenomenal baby-boom growth, and private schools, while expanding, could not match that rapid pace (Kraushaar, 1972: 14; Bianchi, 1981).

The estimated current private school share of the market, around 11 percent, deserves emphasis, since many recent discussions imply that private schools are threatening to eclipse public schools. To the contrary, these figures show only modest changes--certainly no massive national migration--and private schools have not even reestablished the share of the school-age population that they enjoyed at one time (13.6 percent in 1959-60). Similarly, the latest Gallup poll on public attitudes toward public education (Gallup, 1981), while highlighting reasons for concern, suggests no national readiness to abandon the public schools. While not about to disappear, however, public schools are facing new problems in competition with private schools, especially in some areas of the nation.

It is important to notice that the national figures on private school enrollment are profoundly affected by developments in Catholic schools, which represent the largest segment by far of the private school movement. Thus the national totals obscure major developments outside the Catholic segment. Private education is composed of diverse groups (Table 1). This composition has been shifting. In 1961-62, Catholic schools accounted for an estimated 73

percent of the total private school enrollment nationally (National Center of Education Statistics, 1966). By virtue mainly of the Catholic school losses mentioned earlier, the proportion dropped to an estimated 64.3 percent 1978-79. For reasons discussed below, the real Catholic proportion is probably lower still.

Table 1

Distribution of Private Schools and Students by Church Affiliation, 1978-79

Affiliation	Number of Schools	%	Number of Students	%
Baptist	858	4.4	204,144	4.0
Calvinist	166	0.8	47,269	0.9
Catholic	9,849	50.1	3,269,761	64.3
Eastern Orthodox	14	0.1	2,682	0.1
Episcopal	314	1.6	76,452	1.5
Friends	50	0.3	14,611	0.3
Jewish	406	2.1	101,758	2.0
Lutheran	1,485	7.6	217,406	4.3
Methodist	60	0.3	11,187	0.2
Presbyterian	60	0.3	12,823	0.3
Seventh-Day Adventist	1,106	5.6	148.157	2.9
Other	1,351	6.7	231,317	4.5
Non-affiliated	3.944	20.1	746,730	14.7

Source NCES Surveys

Bianchi (1981) demonstrated that Catholic school losses, when combined with gains (discussed below) in other private schools groups, produced a regional shift as well, for whereas the large Catholic school systems have been concentrated in the Midwest and Northeast, the private schools which have grown most rapidly of late are most prominent in the South and West.

The above-discussed data are misleading in two critical repects. First, they are organized in terms of a faulty

classification. Second, they involve serious omissions.

Any private school classification based, like this one, simply on broad denominational affiliation (and the lack therof) is misleading, for some of the most pronounced differences among private school groups are associated with socioeconomic status and (among the religiously affiliated schools) with differences in theological liberalism, both of which cross denominational boundaries, and often vary notably within them. One of the best ways to identify fundamentalist schools is to locate the schools that are affiliated with the fundamentalist school associations, ignoring denominational affiliation. The best way to separate the resoundingly conservative Lutheran schools from the avowedly liberal and ecumenical is to learn what branch of Lutheranism they represent. Schools associated with the very conservative Wisconsin Synod are remarkably different from schools operated by the Lutheran Church in America, for example. the best way to identify the high-tuition schools, quite obviously, is to inquire about tuition levels.

For most purposes, in this writer's view, one must, as a minimum, differentiate the fundamentalist schools from the other church-related schools, (which often report the same broad denominational affiliations), consider the Catholic schools separately from the Protestant schools, attempt to isolate the high-tuition schools (even those that are church-related) from the other private schools, and devote a residual, "other" catagory to special types, including private schools with prominent ethnic overtones and the

private "community" (previously known as "free") schools, for these types exhibit notable differences. Thus, a minimally adequate classification might be:

Catholic schools
Other "Mainline" church-related schools
Fundamentalist schools
High-tuition schools (tuitions over $1,500 per year)
Other special types

For some purposes, obviously, finer-grained differentiations will be necessary. Differences among Lutheran groups have already been mentioned. For another example, Catholic schools operated independently by religious orders are different from Catholic parish (parochial) schools, and secondary schools, partly because they are normally much more costly, are often noticeably different (in clientele, etc.) from elementary schools, even when operated under the same auspices.

As for omissions in the above-discussed data: Most basically, a great many private schools are missing from the national "universe" lists which various groups have assembled, and thus are difficult to contact during surveys. Though most states require by law that all private schools at least register and report their enrollment, the requirement is unevenly enforced. Many fledgling private schools, preferring to maintain a low profile (partly to ward off government interference), simply ignore the requirement. The major private school agencies can usually provide reasonably reliable data on their member schools. But many private schools do not belong to such agencies, and other private schools are reported twice or more because they belong to

more than one agency. Partly because they have been widely misunderstood and criticized, many fundamentalist schools (and other private schools as well, particularly among the more radical varieties) are loathe to release data about themselves, fearing that it will be used against them or that the act of providing data will compromise the principle, to which many of them strongly adhere, that they are responsible to no one except their patrons, their churches, and the Almighty.

In a recent attempt to determine how many private schools may have escaped the net in recent surveys by the National Center for Education Statistics, Cooper and McLaughlin (1981) estimated that something like 13 percent of all private schools may have been missed. The proportion of the missing among fundamentalist schools is much higher--about 33 percent. These estimates suggest that the private school proportion of the national elementary-secondary school enrollment in 1978-79 may have been around 12 percent, rather than the 10.7 percent estimated by NCES, and that the Catholic school proportion of the private school enrollment was significantly lower than 64.3 percent.

However, the NCES estimates may be even farther off. Cooper and McLaughlin "correct" only for schools that were not on the NCES universe list. Further serious underestimates probably resulted from the NCES decision to omit from its national surveys all schools with no grades above the first. Since there is a pronounced tendency for fundamentalist schools to start as preschools or

kindergartens that slowly expand upward a grade at a time, many of the recently founded fundamentalist schools may have been systematicaly excluded by NCES.

In addition, many other private schools may be unrepresented in the NCES estimates. Many private "free" or "community" schools may be absent, for many of these go to great lengths to remain invisible to authorities. A great many arrangements by which families, individually or in groups, instruct their own children, are no doubt undetected, for many of these groups do not define themselves as "schools," especially when the "deschooling" philosophy underlies their efforts. In this regard it is obvious that the number of private schools "out there," detected or undetected, will vary markedly according to one's definition on what is and is not a "school."

II. Differential Expansion and Contraction

History has shown repeatedly that private schools of different types wax and wane under different circumstances, depending on such factors as fiscal structure and primary patron motivations. In the early decades, Catholic school growth came partly in response to militant Protestantism in public schools, though ethnic and social class considerations also played a prominent part (Burns and Kohlbrenner, 1937; Sanders, 1969). During the same period, many Protestant schools were disappearing, partly because public schools, then so congenial to Protestants, had become free of user fees and widely available (see, for example, Beck, 1939). Shortly after World War I, in response to anti-foreign

jingoism, hundreds of private schools abandoned their ethnic character, and rather promptly went out of business (Beck, 1939). There were no Old Order Amish schools until, after the end of World War II, the reorganization and consolidation movement destroyed small countryside public schools in Amish communities and threatened to expose Old Order Amish children to the alien youth cultures of nearby towns (Hostetler, 1968).

More recently, U.S. Catholic schools experienced precipitous losses for several years after 1966 (Table 2). By 1977-78, the total enrollment in Catholic elementary and secondary schools (3,289,000) was only 59 percent of what it had been in 1965-66 (5,573,800), though the decline was getting proportionally smaller year by year, and appears as of this writing (1981) to be near an end. Since the complex dynamics of that decline have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Erickson, 1971; Erickson and Madaus, 1971), a brief summary may be sufficient for present purposes. In the minds of some lay catholics, the Second Vatican Council (ending in 1965) and several associated developments in the church raised serious new questions about the religious value of Catholic schools (Ryan, 1963). The same shift in church teachings, along with a strong new emphasis on the training of the "religious," gave nuns, priests, and brothers unaccustomed liberty to choose their areas of service, and placed new emphasis upon helping the poor. In apparent response, and because Catholic religious orders were rapidly diminishing in size, nuns and brothers disappeared from

Catholic schools in large numbers, forcing the schools to replace them with far-more-costly "lay" teachers. Even the "religious" who remained were more costly, for their communities, with few young people joining them, were supporting a growing proportion of elderly patrons. Assuming that religious motivations for the schools were weakening, many Catholic school leaders sought increased academic respectability in expensive ways, such as reducing class size, increasing teacher salaries, and reducing teacher turnover (thus ensuring that more teachers would be paid at higher levels of salary schedules). At the same time, many Catholic schools were losing enrollment because of the birth-rate decline, changing values, the migration of many Catholics from cities (where Catholic schools existed) to suburbs (where Catholic schools often did not exist), and other factors; so many schools closed because decreasing economies of scale compounded the spiraling costs beyond reason. Partly because they were as yet unaware of the impact of the declining birth rate, and perhaps partly because they themselves were losing faith in Catholic schools, most U.S. bishops thought the loss of clients signified widespread disenchantment with Catholic schools, and for this reason and others, forbade further construction of schools in the suburbs to which many upwardly mobile Catholics were then moving (Erickson and Madaus, 1971; Erickson, Nault, and Cooper, 1978; Greeley, McCready, & McCourt, 1976). Greeley and his colleagues insist that there is now a large pent-up demand for Catholic schools - pent-up

mostly by the refusal of the bishops to permit new construction. There is probably an additional pent-up demand for Catholic schools among low-income inner-city minorities (including many non-Catholics), who have flooded the inner-city Catholic schools that have remained open (after their erstwhile Catholic patrons migrated to the suburbs) by dint of substantial parish and diocesan subsidies. It seems unlikely that these schools will continue to operate indefinitely unless they find new sources of income.

Table No. 2
Catholic Schools and Enrollments
1965-66 thru 1977-78

	Elementary		Secondary	
	Schools	Students	Schools	Students
1965-66	10,879	4,492,100	2,413	1,081,700
67-68	10,350	4,106,000	2,277	1,093,000
68-69	10,113	3,860,000	2,192	1,081,000
69-70	9,695	3,607,000	2,076	1,051,000
70-71	9,370	3,356,000	1,980	1,008,000
71-72	8,982	3,076,000	1,857	959,000
72-73	8,761	2,871,000	1,773	919,000
73-74	8,569	2,714,000	1,728	907,000
74-75	8,437	2,602,000	1,690	902,000
75-76	8,329	2,525,000	1,647	889,000
76-77	8,265	2,483,000	1,617	882,000
77-78	8,204	2,421,000	1,593	868,000

Source: National Catholic Education Association (1978)

The fact that the Catholic school decline was approximately twice as pronounced in elementary as in secondary schools supports the interpretation that a large part of the Catholic school problem was one of adjusting to the fiscal shocks described above. A high proportion of Catholic elementary schools have always been "parochial"--operated on a parish-by-parish basis. These schools have been plagued by the vagaries of single-parish finance, in- and out-migration, etc., whereas the vast majority of

Catholic secondary schools are operated by dioceses and religious orders, which can absorb many parish-wide disturbances, which generally have the flexibility inherent in much larger, more divese budgets and income sources, and which tend to recruit their students within much wider geographic ambits. Catholic scholars have criticized the parish-based system as inefficient, unstable, and inequitable (Notre Dame, 1971).

Since it appears that Catholic schools in general have now adapted extensively to the fiscal disruptions that began in the sixties, this writer would not be surprised to see the system begin to grow again. There are some small signs that U.S. bishops are looking somewhat more favorably on the idea of erecting new buildings and enlarging old ones. Also, Catholic parishes in recent years have been adopting rather widely a practice that has long been common among other church groups--to offer kindergartens and pre-schools, which often turn out to be extremely effective "feeders" for church-related elementary schools.

During the years after 1966 when Catholic schools were declining rapidly, Hebrew day schools underwent a period of notable growth, prompted in significant measure, it appears, by Holocaust and its ramifications in the context of a "fever of ethnicity" then flaring in the United States (Frost, 1981; Novak, 1971). Enrollment in U.S. Hebrew day schools, including the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform varieties, burgeoned by 25 percent between 1965-66, when total enrollment was 72,289, to 1975-76, when total enrollment was

90,538 (Erickson, Nault, and Cooper, 1978). Recent growth has been more modest, with total enrollment standing at approximately 94,000 in 1980 (Goldenberg, 1981).

Somewhat similarly, perhaps for some of the reasons (discussed below) that explain explosive growth during the same period in fundamentalist schools, total enrollment in Seventh-Day Adventist schools jumped by 50 percent between 1965 and 1975-76 (from 50,465 to 75,722), but has varied little since that time (Erickson, Nault, and Cooper, 1978; Furst, 1981).

The most dramatic contrast to the Catholic school decline was provided by fundamentalist schools, those operated by groups claiming a "born again" experience, groups now associated with the "Moral Majority". Conducting a dissertation in fundamentalist schools in 1961-62, this author had great difficulty securing an adequate sample, discovering that these schools, probably numbering no more than 250 or 300 nationally at the time, were generally very small, often limited to a kindergarten and/or the first one or two grades, and officially discouraged by virtually every fundamentalist denomination (Erickson, 1962). The official stance of these denominations was that public schools were sufficiently neutral religiously to be suitable for fundamentalist children as long as these children were given adequate religious preparation in home and church, and that, furthermore, fundamentalists were obligated to maintain a strong witness to their faith among student bodies in public schools (most of these groups believe in child conversions).

The U.S. Supreme Court's decisions in the early 1960's outlawing official prayers and Bible reading in the public schools, came as a major shock to many fundamentalists. For this reason, apparently, and for others discussed later, the fundamentalist Christian day school movement soon began to experience rapid growth and the encouragement of major denominational figures. No other group of private schools appears to have benefitted from such a dramatic reversal of official ideology in recent years.

A firm known as Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), in Lewisville, Texas, may have played a powerful catalytic role in the growth of fundamentalist schools. ACE has provided many hundreds of these schools with a way of bypassing major capital costs and other complications (e.g., the need to set up an organization, find competent staff members, and recruit a sufficient number of students for each grade) that inhibit the establishment of private schools of other types. ACE provides materials that include self-paced, self-administered programmed-instruction modules in all major academic subjects in all grades, along with extensive advice concerning virtually every other aspect of establishing fundamentalist schools. With these materials in hand, any small group, with no more than a handful of students in scattered grades, can create a school almost instantaneously, in a home, church basement, Sunday-school classroom, or store front, for if the ACE directions are followed, and if students consistently work their way through the modules, reasonably normal learning in the essential subjects does

appear to occur. There are obvious academic risks, since it is difficult to keep some children on task when working in isolated carrels, and it is arguable that some higher-order learning may not occur in such a context. However, many patrons of these schools, while not uncorcerned about academic performance, seem motivated primarily by religious and moral concerns, and thus are ready, if necessary, to accept academic risks. There seems to be some tendency for fundamentalist schools to start with the ACE materials as a crutch and later to veer toward more conventional instructional methods.

The Association of Christian Schools International (Whittier, CA), the most broadly based association of fundamentalist schools, recently reported the following data to Professor Richard Nault, who courteously shared them with this author:

School Year	Numbers of Schools	Numbers of Students
1976-77	500	63,131
1977-78	611	74,460
1978-79	1051	185,687
1979-80	1294	220,001
1980-81	1482	289,001

However, the fundamentalist schools tend to be fiercely individualist, and thus often belong to no association and report their existence and enrollment to no one. Estimates conerning their number, enrollment, and growth vary widely. Accelerated Christian Education states that it deals with an average of three new schools per week. Bob Billings, currently Executive Assistant to the U.S. Secretary of

Education, who has been intimately acquainted with the fundamentalist school movement, recently provided this writer with an estimate of 1,500 schools and approximately 1 million students. This estimate probably includes many students in kindergarten and pre-school, and many schools that offer only these levels of instruction. But whether or not the "real" elementary-secondary total is somewhat lower or higher than the estimates, it is obvious that the rate of growth since the early sixties has been rapid indeed.

During this same period of Catholic school losses, most other private school groups maintained a relatively steady state, marked by times of modest expansion and decline. Lutheran school enrollment, considered as a whole, was about the same in 1975-76 as it was ten years earlier, but since that time has moved upward by approximately 10 percent to an all-time high (Erickson, Nault, and Cooper, 1978: Board of Parish Education, 1980). The Calvinist schools affiliated with Christian Schools International in Grand Rapids, Michigan (formerly known as the National Union of Christian Schools) enrolled a total of 51,240 in 1966-67. The total dropped to 48,096 in 1976-77, but since that time has risen to 54,466 in 1979-80 (Christian Schools International, 1981).

No one knows why, during the decade or so after 1965, some church-related schools enjoyed at least a few years of very rapid growth, while other church-related schools barely maintained their share of the student population. This writer suspects that the differences have to do with varying degrees of sensitivity to such religious/moral issues as

court decisions on prayer and Bible reading, the perceived breakdown of discipline and moral consensus in many public schools, the introduction of sex education programs in public schools, etc. The groups experiencing the greatest growth appear to be those which, because of their conservative theologies and traditional moral postures, are most likely to be offended by some recent developments. However, much closer analysis would be required to test that relationship.

The high-tuition schools affiliated with the National Association of Independent Schools (in Boston) expanded their total enrollment by 14.1 percent between 1965-66 and 1975-76, from 199,329 to 277,406 (Erickson, Nault, and Cooper, 1978). That growth has quickened slightly in recent years, and many such schools report that their waiting lists have grown even more than enrollments (Stockdale, 1981). Since schools of this type usually have superior physical facilities, equipment, materials, etc., they are expensive to establish, so supply responds only sluggishly to demand, especially since the profit motive is missing (all NAIS schools are non-profit). In current data banks, there is no reasonably straightforward way to assemble data for the high-tuition schools that do not belong to NAIS.

Within the high-tuition schools, some underwent hard times during the period. Boarding schools went down hill until 1976-77, but have grown very rapidly since then. Total enrollment in all-boy schools has diminished greatly, partly because many of these schools went co-ed. Military schools withered in the shadow of the Viet Nam War, but have renewed

their popularity of late, perhaps in reaction to the perceived deterioration of discipline among contemporary youth (Stockdale, 1981).

In summary, no one knows how much demand has been piling up at the doors of U.S. private schools, ready to gush forth if something triggers the founding of many new schools and the expansion of many existing ones. In the meantime, there is no clear evidence to substantiate reports of a dramatic, widespread expansion in the private school world--with the exception of the fundamentalist schools, which, as we have seen, are not subject to the same inhibitions that limit growth in most other private schools. Though growing rapidly, the fundamentalist schools are not yet sufficiently numerous to pose a serious national challenge to public schools. However, there may be significant local exceptions to these national trends. Reports from many sources, generally unsystematic and impressionistic, suggest to this author that significant local migrations from public to private schools often occur when public school policies (e.g., forced busing, curtailment of the freedom to support local public schools at a superior level, introduction of instruction that some groups find repugnant) alienate segments of the population. It is surprising that so little has been done to investigate these possibilities, since their implications reach very far.

III. Finances

It scarcely needs saying that financial arrangements do much to dictate what a school can accomplish by way of

programs and facilities. The financial arrangements also do much to determine who can afford to attend.

Schools within the major religiously affiliated groups rarely fall into the high-tuition category. There appear to be two major reasons for the generally negative relationship between religious affiliation (particularly when it is of a theologically conservative type) and tuition level. First, when patrons can be attracted on religious grounds, a school has less need to promise notably superior academic services, and some patrons, as was noted earlier, will even be willing to risk getting somewhat inferior academic returns. To put the matter another way, when no special religious or ethnic incentives (generaly the latter are associated with religious ones) can be used to attract clients, the normal alternative is promised academic superiority, sometimes with certain important side-benefits, such as "connections". Second, religious groups usually have ways of distributing the costs of maintaining a school among a larger group of people than the immediate patrons, thus cutting patron costs. In the not-so-distant past, Catholic schools were subsidized enormously by services provided for a pittance by nuns, brothers, and priests. Those subsidies have largely disappeared, but many Catholic parish schools still get money from the parish purse, other Catholic schools enjoy diocesan subsidies, and even when dollar subsidies are not available, space, maintenance services, and utilities are often provided free or at greatly reduced cost. Similar subsidies are common in many other church-related schools, as are the

benefits of many special fund-raising activites which muster dollars from the congregation as a whole. In addition, dollar costs are often held down by encouraging patrons who have more time than money to contribute, to contribute the former in considerable quantities.

Accordingly, the high-tuition schools may be identified to a considerable extent (though with major omissions) by merely identifying the schools without religious affiliations. Even when this rough-hewn classification method is used, dramatic cost differences appear. According to a 1978-79 survey by the National Center for Education Statistics, average tuitions in that year were $561 in Catholic schools, $651 in Lutheran schools, $1,822 in religiously unaffiliated schools, and $981 in a residual category called "other private schools" (Eldridge, 1981). The comparatively high mean for the "other private" group results from the fact that numerous religiously affiliated schools dumped into this category are associated with higher-SES theologically liberal churches, and thus, since their patrons have less religious reason to view public schools as hostile, tend to attract these patrons by means of academic inducements. Conveniently, these schools also are in a better position to levy the high fees that make impressive facilities and elaborate programs feasible as inducements to such patrons.

With the exception of such incidental benefits as school lunch programs, free textbooks, and free bus rides, few private schools outside the Catholic group have made a

systematic effort to participate in federally funded programs for the disadvantaged and other specially targeted groups. Funds from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, in particular, have been an important source of revenue or program enrichment in many Catholic schools. To attempt estimates of the total dollars in direct or indirect government assistance that private schools derive is, however, a demanding task (one to which the National Center fo Education Statistics is now directing attention), much too demanding to be attempted here.

IV. Who Attends?

Partly because the Catholic Church draws members from an unusually wide range of the socioeconomic spectrum, and partly because exceptionally low fees make many Catholic schools accessible to families with modest incomes, it is not surprising that socioeconomic backgrounds are more widely dispersed in Catholic schools than in other major private school groups (Kraushaar, 1972; Coleman, 1981). The other church-related schools appear to draw more exclusively from the middle class, and as high tuitions do much to ensure, high-status homes appear to predominate in the high-tuition schools (Kraushaar, 1972).

It is far from surprising that Catholic schools are patronized predominantly by Catholics (except in central cities), that Lutheran schools are patronized predominantly by Lutherans, that schools associated with the Christian Reformed Church are inhabited mostly by people of Dutch

extraction who belong to the Christian Reformed Church, that not many Black fundamentalists attend Hebrew day schools, and that schools with high fees do not attract large proportions of low-income people. There is a certain irony, consequently, in many discussions about religious, racial, and socioeconomic segregation in private schools. If a Catholic school somehow ceases to enroll primarily Catholics, it may thus obliterate all religious and racial bias in admissions, but it will also probably destroy its Catholic characer. If a high-tuition school reduces its fees or introduces scholarships to a sufficient extent to ensure that all income groups have equal access, then, unless it has extremely unusual sources of fiscal support, it will probably destroy its ability to finance the unusually attractive facilities and programs that constitute its major reason for being. Consequently, it is often difficult to separate the consequences of a school's special religious or academic emphasis from the consequences of an intentional desire to keep certain people from enrolling.

It would be easy, but possibly quite misleading, for instance, to conclude from the small representation of blacks and other minorities in many church-related schools that school leaders and patrons are attempting to keep minorities out. A different light is shed on the situation when one remembers that the religious affiliations of minorities often make them uninterested in the schools of particular denomiations.

In their analysis of the first wave of data from the

current longtudinal study, "High School and Beyond", Coleman and his colleagues found that when Catholic blacks were compared with Catholic whites, and when nonCatholic blacks were compared with nonCatholic whites, blacks at the high and low income levels attended Catholic high schools to a disproportionate extent. In general, black attendance was far lower, proportionately, in Catholic high schools as a whole than in public high schools as a whole, but the blacks who were in Catholic high schools were far less likely than blacks in public schools to have predominantly black classmates. Coleman and colleagues found that private schools did contribute significantly to the religious segregation of the nation's school-age population. The reseachers thought the extent of socioeconomic segregation caused by private schools was considerable less pronounced than was generally believed (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1981).

Since it seems inevitable that other reports in this series will consider in much detail the distribution of private school enrollment by race and income, it may suffice for present purposes to note that the national broad comparisons for public and private schools are as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

A few earlier studies provided evidence that some of the best-known high-tuition private schools in the Northeast drew their students disproportionately, not merely from high-income homes, but from upper-class homes (defined, for example, in terms of listings in the Social Register) and

were distinguished by identifiable indications of a distinct upper-class culture (for example, Baltzell, 1958; McArthur, 1955, 1960; Wilson, 1959; Prince, 1959). There is no way of determining how widespread those tendencies were at the time, or whether they have persisted. This writer is aware of no recent significant work along that line.

Table 3. Family Income and Education of Head Distributions of Public, Church Related and Other Private Elementary and Secondary Enrollment: 1979.

Family Income and Education	Enrolled in Public Schools	Enrolled in Private Schools	
		Church	Other
FAMILY INCOME			
Less than $5,000	10%	3%	1%
$5,000-9,999	16	6	7
$10,000-14,999	20	15	8
$15,000-19,999	16	18	10
$20,000-24,999	16	20	10
$25,000-49,999	19	31	30
$50,000 and over	3	7	34
Total	100%	100%	100%
(Number of children in thousands)	(32298)	(3247)	(515)
EDUCATION OF HEAD			
Less than 12 years	31%	16%	8%
12 years	38	36	23
13-15 years	15	19	16
16 years	8	15	19
17 or more years	8	14	34
Total	100%	100%	100%
(Number of children in thousands)[a]	(37454)	(3473)	(584)

[a] Numbers are larger than for family income because of nonreporting of income.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1979 October Current Population Survey, compiled by Bianchi, 1981.

Table 4. Percent of White and Black Children Who Were Enrolled in Elementary and Secondary Private Schools in the Total U.S. and in Central Cities: 1967-1979.

Race	% Enrolled												
	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967
Total U.S. All Races	10	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	11	11	12	12
White	11	11	11	10	11	11	11	11	11	12	12	13	14
Black	5	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
Central Cities, All Races	16	17	16	15	15	14	14	15	15	16	17	18	18
White	20	22	21	20	20	19	18	19	20	21	22	23	22
Black	7	6	6	5	4	4	6	5	4	5	6	6	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports. Series P-20. Nos. 190,222,241,260,272,286,303,319,333,346, and 355, compiled by Bianchi, 1981.

V. Patron Motivations

The literature on patron motivations in private schools is inadequate to support firm comparisons among private schools of different types. It suggests tentatively to this writer, however, that there is a curvilinear relationship between the primacy of academic goals and patron socio-economic status, or at least has been in the past. It appears that the lowest-status patrons of private schools (inner-city black and Latino patrons of Catholic and Lutheran schools, and minority scholarship students in high-tuition schools, for example) have chosen these schools because they have unusually strong mobility aspirations for their children and because they view available public schools as inadequate avenues of mobility (e.g., Cibulka, 1981). Most middle-class patrons--the ones who populate the major groups of church-

related schools--have not come primarily for academic reasons (though this may be changing in some areas), for they live in areas where public schools are in reasonably good repute, and they either do not see great value, or cannot afford, the high-tuition private schools that purport to be very superior academically; therefore, when they choose private schools they do so for religious or ethnic reasons, or in reaction to public school policies (e.g., busing or sex education) which they find repugnant. Upper-middle and upper class patrons usually come primarily because they want a particularly superior schooling for their children, though in the most elite schools most of them probably are aware of the value of the social "connections" established in schools to which influential people send their children (Kamin and Erickson, 1981). In general, these high-SES patrons of private schools do not seem unconcerned about religion, but their religious views tend to be liberal and ecumenical, not emphasizing the particular knowledge and character attributes that they think church-related schools are capable of promoting.

These general patterns may be changing in areas where public schools are perceived by many people as suffering serious deterioration. Furthermore, as was noted earlier, groups which once saw no particular religious value in private schools may be changing their views in the light of recent and current developments in public schools. The possibility arises, then, that new segments of the population are being added to the traditional pools from which private schools draw patrons. If so, the long-range implications for

public schools could be serious indeed, especially if the new pools include some of public education's most influential supporters.

A. Motivations in High-Tuition Schools

The limited evidence (Kraushaar, 1972; Kamin and Erickson, 1981) suggests to this writer that high-tuition private schools (those, let us say, with annual tuitions above $1,500) are patronized primarily for academic reasons, by patrons who have exceptionally high aspirations for their children and generally tend, partly by virtue of their superior income and education, to seek out superior goods and services in areas that they consider important. A recent survey in British Columbia (Kamin and Erickson, 1981) suggests that these people often devote unusual inquiry and thought to the choice of a school. Though the evidence does not show this (partly because the research was not designed to that end), it seems reasonable to believe that patrons of some high-tuition schools are well aware of the value of the social "connections" formed in those schools, and that they choose the schools partly for that reason. Also, family tradition may play a part, since it has been shown on a very limited basis that some families have been associated for generations with some private schools (Baltzell, 1958). This is most likely to be true along the Eastern Seaboard, the traditional stronghold of elite private schools.

It is important to recognize that the same motivations would be equally apropos in the schools that Francis Keppel has called "private schools at public expense"--public

schools in expensive suburbs, attended almost exclusively by the well-to-do and supported at exceptionally high levels through local taxation rather than fees. Since these public schools offer no scholarships to poor students from outside their attendance boundaries, they may be more exclusive than their private counterparts. Research along this line would be instructive.

A study in a wealthy California community by Gratiot (1979) is directly pertinent. Gratiot found that many families were switching from public to private schools, often quite reluctantly, because they felt powerless to prevent the perceived deterioration of their public schools. They complained repeatedly about events in public schools that seemed increasingly beyond their control, including reduced emphasis on academic performance, declining discipline, and an eroding financial base.

Gratiot's study, when coupled with informal reports from many other sources, suggest the following dynamics to this writer. They should be subjected to systematic empirical testing before being regarded as anything more than informed speculation:

1. Developments in numerous states (the Serrano case and similar decisions elsewhere, for example) are denying wealthy communities the option of supporting their public schools at exceptionally high levels, thus ensuring that many parents who insist on expensive schools will consider defecting to the private sector. The effects of these developments are probably intensified by recent limitations

on taxation for public schools.

2. In the context of the recent "student rights" movement, much legislation and case law has been created to ensure that students will not be unfairly treated by teachers and school administrators. Two comparisons of student-perceived fairness in public schools (which are subject to those limitations) and private schools (which are not) suggest that fairness to students has not been produced by such attempts (Erickson, MacDonald, and Manley-Casimir, 1979; Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1981). However, one suspects the legislation and litigation <u>has</u> made it much more difficult to maintain reasonable discipline among students in public schools.

3. Somewhat similarly, there has been much legislation and litigation in defense of "teacher rights." One obvious effect has been to deny many schools the freedom to ensure that teachers will exemplify life styles that local communities find congenial. As a consequence, many parents apparently feel that local public schools are out of tune with, or even hostile toward, the values of patron's homes. At some point, authority in schools may break down for lack of agreement over central values. Schools may become places where everyone feels free to do almost anything that is not illegal (Grant, 1981).

4. Numerous political economists insist that the sheer size of many contemporary institutions deprives people of real and perceived power over their own destinies. Public schools may be suffering from the long-term consequences of

the consolidation and reorganization movement that flourished shortly after World War II, for it resulted in a resounding increase in the average size of public schools and school districts.

5. Other scholars view the "professionalization" of school personnel as a process that systematically disempowers lay citizens (Zeigler, Tucker, and Wilson, 1977).

6. Public school "nationalization" documented by Campbell and Bunnell and their colleagues some years ago (1963), seems to have been intensified considerably by the readiness of federal courts to function virtually as school boards in an effort to right various wrongs of society as a whole. This development is not likely to endear public schools to the hearts of many patrons.

7. During the past decade, particularly, the movement toward full state funding of public schools has been accompanied, as many scholars predicted, by increasing state intervention into the functioning of local schools.

When one considers all these factors, it would not be surprising if many parents in wealthy communities were ceasing to regard public schools as institutions where they could provide their children with the kind of education they prefer. However, the superior-looking schools that such parents desire are exceedingly difficult and expensive to establish, in the private sector--so one would expect exactly what seems the case--growing demand more dramatically evidenced in waiting lists than in enrollment growth in high-tuition schools.

B. The "Mainline" Religious Schools

The available though limited evidence suggests that most "mainline" religious schools, operated primarily by Catholic, Lutheran, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Christian Reformed sponsors, are a response primarily to religious motivations, though academic demands run a fairly close second and may be growing in importance as public school problems intensify. It is often difficult to distinguish religious and academic aspirations, since the disciplined climates often maintained for religious reasons are probably strongly conducive to academic productivity, and most parents seem aware of that connection (see the review of Catholic-school evidence in Erickson and Madaus, 1978; also Greeley, McCready, and McCourt, 1976; regarding other church-related schools see Kamin and Erickson, 1981).

The apparent recent surge in demand for these church-related schools, especially outside the Catholic sector, a demand reflected (here, too) in waiting lists even more than in increased enrollment, may be a response to many of the same developments in public education that appear (to this writer) to be alienating many high-status families. In fact some of these factors may alienate religiously oriented people for both religious and academic reasons.

There is reason to believe that motivations for the schools of a single denomination may differ significantly by location. For instance, in inner cities, where many public schools are in ill-repute, both Catholics and nonCatholics may attend primarily for academic reasons. In the suburbs,

where public school reputations are generally better, religious motivations may come to the fore (Donovan and Madaus, 1969).

C. Fundamentalist Schools

The motivations of patrons of fundamentalist schools have been probed in numerous recent studies (Ballweg, 1980; Carper, 1980; Cunningham, 1980; Nordin and Turner, 1980; Palmer, 1974; Schaller, 1979; Skerry, 1980; Nevin and Bills, 1976), and with notably consistent results. All of the studies appear to have been prompted in part by allegations that the fundamentalist schools were a response to racist motivations. All conclude that these allegations are either serious oversimplifications or almost totally wrong. The general fundamentalist reaction to the outlawing of prayer and Bible reading, already mentioned, comes up again and again. Fundamentalists, with strong taboos even against behavior that other devout people tolerate, are particularly outraged by "drugs, sex, and rock" in public schools and by several styles of life maintained by teachers whom boards are now powerless to exclude from public schools in fundamentalist communities. To offend these people even more, many public school boards in the United States recently have refused to permit classroom presentation of creationism as an alternative cosmology to evolution. It does not help alleviate the impression of public school hostility that when fundamentalist schools spring up, they are often harrassed by court action and threats thereof on the part of public school leaders. If public school boards had conspired to encourage

the growth of fundamentalist schools, one wonders whether they could have done so more effectively. Since the forces against which these people are reacting seem difficult to reverse, further growth seems likely in the fundamentalist schools.

D. Other Private School Types

As anyone would expect, there is evidence to indicate that the patrons of distinctly ethnic private schools (e.g., Greek Orthodox schools and Hebrew day schools) tend to be attending partly for ethnic reasons (e.g., Kopan, 1974; Goldenberg, 1975). Similarly, one would expect patrons of Montessori schools, "free" schools, military schools, cathedral choir schools, etc., to be attracted primarily by the special programs that such schools offer. Private school fees probably do much to ensure that disagreement over these central, clearly evidenced goals will be quite limited in private schools. (Patrons are not likely to pay for something they do not want.)

VI. Operating Characteristics

In general, private schools appear to operate in a manner predictable from the primary expressed preferences of their patrons. This may be one reason why private school patrons appear unusually likely to describe their schools as responsive to them (Erickson, MacDonald, and Manley-Casimir, 1979).

To say that schools operate in keeping with the preferences of their partrons is not necessarily to assert, however, that the schools produce what the patrons want them

to produce. The latter question, at the heart of the large debate now revolving around the study by Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1981) is far too complex to be discussed satisfactorily within the bounds of the present paper.

As early as 1931, in a state-wide Minneapolis investigation, Koos noted the far greater stress on academic aspects in nonsectarian private schools (most of which charge high tuitions) than in the mainline church-related varieties. The private schools described by Cremin (1964) as making major contributions to the Progressive Education Movement were all apparently of the high-tuition variety, as were the schools which Larmee (1962) discovered to have played a remarkably prominent role in the development of several curriculum innovations of the 1950's. More recently, Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1981) have noted the greater program complexity of their "other private" group, even though this category, including a conceptually impossible potpourri of private schools, probably does much to obscure the strength of the tendency.

Skerry (1980) observed as evidence of the validity of patrons' asserted motivations, that the same motivations could easily be inferred from the incessant stress, throughout the school day and week, upon the values that the patrons had cited, and by the complete absence of any policies or activities that would support the charge of racism. Evidence of the "permeation" of so-called "secular" subjects with religious overtones in Catholic schools has been documented to some extent (LaNove, 1963). Here again,

one should not assume that the activities have their desired effect; the point is that the modus operandi reflects predominant patron desires. In a recent British Columbia survey (Kamin and Erickson, 1981), private school groups differed significantly in their patterns of relative strengths and weaknesses as rated by parents--in a manner easily predictable from expressed parent preferences.

Beyond these simple generalizations, there is little systematic description of how various private schools actually operate. A few simple Amish schools have been described (Erickson, 1968). Fichter's (1968) sociological study of a parochial school, though still provocative, is now seriously out of date. Kleinfeld (1979) has produced an excellent ethnography of a Catholic school for Eskimo students. There are several fairly extensive descriptions of private boarding schools (e.g., McLaughlin, 1970). We know that in many fundamentalist schools (but certainly not all), students spend much time in small carrels, working strictly on their own, on programmed instructional modules. We know that vocational courses are far less frequent in private high schools than in public high schools, and that generally the former are more narrowly focused on the "meaty" academic subjects (Abramowitz, 1980; Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1981). There is an increasing tendency for some mainline church-related school groups to publish and use their own textbooks, particularly in the subjects they consider religiously sensitive. Senske (1981) found increasing concern about textbook content in these schools. "It is

becoming increasingly important to a lot of schools," he observed, "that some mention of creationism be included in the science texts, that social studies texts present a broader and nonsecular world view, and that fiction and fantasy in literature texts be de-emphasized." He found that Christian Schools International (the national agency for schools associated with the Christian Reformed Church) was publishing its own textbooks in social studies, language arts, science, health and sex education, physical education, technology, art, and music. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, whose sex education materials have been widely used by church groups both within and outside Lutheran circles, was developing a new series on the same topic. The Seventh-Day Adventist Board of Education was publishing textbooks in reading, health, and science; the Solomon Schechter Day School Association was providing textual material in Hebrew and Jewish Education for Hebrew day schools; and, as well known, the Montessori schools, public and private, had numerous printed materials of their own. In addition, as we have seen the Accelerated Christian Education firm has generated a huge mail-order business in materials for fundamentalist schools. If one includes various forms of individual and group home instruction in defining private schools, then mention should be made of the large market for firms catering to these. Richard Nault once suggested to me that someone should conduct a series of careful descriptive studies in which the outworking of widely divergent philosophies in private schools of different types would be

delineated systematically. I thoroughly agree, but if it is not done soon, some of the most interesting varieties may no longer be available to study.

Despite the notable variety among private schools, these schools share fiscal aand affiliational arrangements which seem likely to have a profound impact, and thus may exhibit some common attributes. Virtually all private schools in the U.S. are privately supported and voluntarily patronized. They may select their students as rigorously as the market permits. They may expel those who prove troublesome, though this apparently is done far less frequently than is widely assumed. Authority is concentrated in the individual school. Private schools are generally much smaller than public schools.

Since most private schools exact fees, and many involve parents in other burdens, they seem likely to be patronized primarily by parents with unusual concern for their children's education. They seem likely to attract clients only by offering something that allegedly cannot be obtained "free" in public schools. Confronted with costs and burdens, their clients appear unlikely to choose schools with whose emphases they disagree, so the constituencies of these schools may be unusually like-minded. The cost and effort involved in patronizing a private school may also, like other investments, elicit further commitment and concern. The jeopardy generally associated with privately supported schools may induce people to band together to make the enterprise succeed. It does not seem unreasonable to

hypothesize, then, that private schools will generally be distinguished from public schools by the extent of parent commitment and involvement, social cohesion, and sense of doing something special. These phenomena could easily elicit cooperative attitudes and behavior from teachers and students as well. And since it is known that many private school patrons, if not most, have unusually high academic aspiration for their children, one would expect private schools to manifest more down-to-business, orderly conditions, a strong stress on student learning, and, at least partly because of the conducive home environments, above-average levels of academic achievement (Erickson, 1979; Erickson, MacDonald, & Manley-Casimir, 1979).

These predictions are tentatively supported by several recent studies, though many private schools clearly are exceptions to the general pattern. In 1977, David Morton and his colleagues reported a study designed to determine why Catholic schools in Rhode Island were consistently superior in levels of student academic achievement to the state's public schools (Morton et al., 1977). Though the researchers compared many aspects of public and Catholic schools, the most consistent differences appeared in the area of social climate. Catholic schools as a whole were distinguished from public schools by greater attention to the central academic subjects (as reflected in more instructional time), fewer student absences, more effective discipline, more supportive parents (in the matter of insisting that homework be done, for example), and teachers who found their work more

rewarding in several ways (partly, perhaps, because of the other characteristics mentioned). A comparison of British Columbia public and private schools in the spring of 1978 indicated that the latter were generally superior in such repects as commitment by teachers, student, and parents; social cohesion; responsiveness to parents; parent involvement; teacher work rewards; the perception by parents and teachers that the schools were superior academically; student enthusiasm for work; the attractiveness to students of teachers and classes; and the extent to which students felt they were treated fairly (Erickson, MacDonald, & Maley-Casimir, 1979). The same general pattern has been found in a comparison of public and private schools in Merced, California (Williamson, 1981). More recently, in their analysis of the first wave of data from the "High School and Beyond" longitudinal study, Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1981) find that in private schools, in comparison with public schools, teachers seem more committed to ensuring that students learn, more time is spent in instruction in the central academic subjects, every type of problematic student behavior considered is less frequent, discipline is rather strict (though students feel treated more fairly), students are less frequently absent, they skip classes less, more homework is assigned and done, parents are more supportive, and students spend less time watching television. In the high-tuition schools, according to one scholar, teachers and parents are such close allies that students complain about it (Coles, 1977).

If differences this pronounced, in the very areas in which public education has been criticized severely of late, are associated with basic structural differences between public and private schools, then it seems appropriate to end this discussion with the following comment: One of the most compelling rationales for the study of private schools may be that by isolating the factors responsible for their particular strengths in such areas, scholars may generate strategies for the improvement of all schools, public and private (Erickson, 1978).

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